

June 1998

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Recommended Citation

Newlin, Lyman (1998) "Papa Lyman Remembers: Against the Grain 1997," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 10: Iss. 3, Article 30.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.2805>

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Papa Lyman Remembers — Against the Grain 1997

by **Lyman Newlin** (Book Trade Counsellor) <broadwater@commtech.net>

I was doing some reminiscing going back through back issues of *Against the Grain*. To do so is to glimpse both current issues and some history in the making. I decided to devote my column to some of the articles that caught my interest in 1997 so get out your back issues and reminisce with me ... On my desk, I have piled the six issues of *ATG* from 1997. I'll try to mention hereinafter (that's a word not in my little Oxford dictionary, but it's in the good old *Webster's New International*, second edition), items which bring up remembrance of things past. From December 96-January 97, **Bill Hannay's** "Go West, Young Thomson," reminds me of an incident from when I managed **Follett's Minnesota Book Store** adjacent to the University in the 1940s. I had some demands for **West Publishing Company's** law texts which were widely used at **Minnesota's Law School** as one might suspect, considering that West was in St. Paul. But this publisher would not sell to Follett because its parent, **Wilcox & Follett Co.**, dealt with second-hand textbooks. Some years later, I became well-acquainted with an executive of the publisher. I once asked him if West's refusal could be considered a restraint of trade and worthy of litigation. Instantly the answer was, "Probably, but who wants to litigate against a firm where even the janitors have JD's."

February, 1997, *ATG*, (v.9#1), here's a coincidence. Page 1 features an "Interview with **John Perry Barlow** on **The Future of the Information Age**," by **Ron Chepesiuk**. During that same month, I had the experience of meeting Mr. Barlow and listening to his promotion of DOI when I was an attendee of the **Association of American Publishers Professional/Scholarly Publishing Division** annual meeting in Washington. Here was a chance, I thought, to test myself. Am I a neo-Luddite, as I began to regard myself, after hearing Mr. Barlow in the Washington AAP conference?

But re-reading the *ATG* article just about convinced me that I am not. Now, a year later, I'm not sure and I no longer worry!

April, 1997, *ATG* (v.9#2), **Group Therapy** (pp.64-65) presents a gripe and answers. I previously sent in a letter to the editor at a time when there was no more space. So I'll try again here with this comment on the gripe of "canceling prepaid orders." **John Perry Smith** quite competently handled the gripe on page 64. The griper would really have something to howl about if his library were to try ordering from the myriad of printers (I hesitate to call them publishers) who are trying to peddle their one and only conceit after having failed to convince a proper publisher of its universal worthiness. In general, these one-time publishers have spent their last sou for printing, have no notion of distribution and would not trust the Almighty for credit. I must add that a sizable number of scholarly society publishers have been (or are) too confounded lazy to employ a set of accepted publisher business procedures and also require payment with order. Your griper should have offered thanks that there are dealers who don't mind dealing with these mavericks but who still want to keep their respective shirts on their backs, even as Mr. Smith does. Dealers don't have the facilities to advise their customers of every one of the hundreds of orders which have to be accompanied by payment demanded by the "publishers." **Ann Revelt of Franklin** reports that fewer than 3% of her publishers require prepayment, and I presume she is not referring to dollars. So, even if the griper's library orders follow this pattern, surely all 3% are not wasted. It begins to appear that we are concerned here with a very small dollar amount. If the library has one call for a title (which is the obvious reason for its being ordered in the first place), it will in all probability get another call for the same ... Best way out is to keep the book and worry about bigger problems.



June, 1997 *ATG* (v.9#3). It's a shame we didn't have time in our Public Library sessions at the **Charleston Conference** number 17 to bring up more matters especially pertinent to public libraries. We could have spent one session on Internet censorship — or should I say, "guardianship." The articles by **Eleanor Cook** in her **Drinking from the Firehose** (p.75) and **Tony Ferguson's Back Talk** (p.90) should be of interest to all public libraries.

September 1997 *ATG* (v.9#4). If you remember or now refer to this issue, you will see that there is certainly one article that is exactly down my alley and with which I am in complete agreement. That's the **Op Ed, Opinions and Editorial column** (p.28) featuring "Our Non-Electronic Future" by my friend of many years, **Gordon Graham**. I am proud to say that I was responsible for first bringing Gordon to the **Charleston Conference**, I believe in 1988. Gordon and his wife, Betty, were in attendance at CC#17 and I hope every attendee had the opportunity to talk with him. By all means, look up his article in this issue and ponder it well. The voice of the heretic should be heard as well as that of the prophet!

November 1997 *ATG* (v.9#5). If you haven't already quit on my column or if you have decided I am completely psyched out — read **Sever Bordeianu's** and **Claire-Lise Benaud's** article "Outsourcing in American Libraries — An Overview," beginning on page 1. Their first sentence says it all for me: "Outsourcing is one of those issues that riles people." It sure riles me. I invite all of you to look through your back issues of *Against the Grain*. They get you thinking ...

Publisher's Profile from page 58

financed by article charges paid by authors, *NJOP* will publish significant research articles from across the whole breadth of physics. This is a radical venture undertaken in response to some of the most far-reaching problems in scientific publishing. In taking this initiative, IoP believes they are maintaining touchstone values of flexible thinking, technical virtuosity and rigorous commitment to quality. While respecting the past, IoP remains a company governed by a tradition of innovation.

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Rumors from page 35

Alfred Jaeger, Inc. is pleased to be celebrating their 40th anniversary in 1998. Also, we are proud to announce that **Alfred Jaeger** is now a registered trademark with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and that the name is a registered service mark filed in the principal register of the United States of America. Stop by their booth at ALA and see what's new.

Also, **Don's** son, **Bryan**, will be playing ice hockey tournaments this summer in Ottawa, Canada and two in Marlboro, MA with the Islander alumni team. This team is coached

by former New York Islanders, **Bob Nystrom** and **Jerry Hart**, who also have sons on this summer travel team.

Jay Jordan is new President and CEO of **OCLC**.

This item comes from **Edupage** — **Bertelsmann AG** of Random House fame is planning to develop an interactive Web site to sell all books (not just its own) on the Internet. It will be a serious competitor to **Amazon.com**, **Barnes & Noble**, and **Borders**. **Cowles/Simba Information** says that Amazon now has 50% of the market and Barnes & Noble 6%. The Borders and Bertelsmann online sites will not be in operation until later this year. (see *USA Today* 25 Mar 98).

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